



US Army Corps of Engineers Kansas City District

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Kansas City District Emergency Management

CONDUCTING FLOOD FIGHTING OPERATIONS

1. Preparation:

Preparing to undertake a flood fighting event requires prior planning and an understanding of basic flood fighting techniques. Each flood event is different, but is similar to past events. Time, weather conditions, river stages/conditions, resources, hours of darkness, and lack of trained personnel will all impact your flood fighting effort. The KEYS to every flood fighting effort is:

- Development of a site specific plan that outlines the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, and HOW of flood fighting.
- Key personnel training in the "ART" of flood fighting.
- Early warning, recognition, and identification of a flood event.
- Command, control, and communications within your flood fighting team.
- Traffic control and traffic patterns to and from the work site(s).
- Sandbag filling operations should be staged away from the work site but close enough to reduce transportation requirements and cycle times.

2. Concept of Operations:

a. Primary and Alternate Assembly Areas:

- Assembly area should have adequate parking.
- Volunteers should report to a designated assembly area.
- Request volunteers bring their own flash light, work gloves, rain gear, shovel, and snack.
- Alternate assembly area should also be identified.
- Sign in roster for volunteers - personnel accountability (name, home phone number, address, work group assignment).
- Recommend that volunteers be transported from assembly areas to staging areas.

b. Staging Areas:

- As close to flood fight location as possible, but must also have good access and egress and good trafficability.
- Recommend that 4 X 4 pick-up trucks be used to transport

filled sandbags.

• Site layout of staging area:

- sandbag filling
- carrying and loading
- materials stockpile
- rest/break area
- first aid area

c. Work Site:

Plan the Work Site: The work site is where the sandbagging operations occur. The traffic pattern again is extremely important and must be well planned. It is recommended that if conditions permit that one way traffic patterns be established. This is extremely important on the levee system. Remember, the higher the sandbag levee the wider the base will be. All Federal levee systems within the Kansas City District were constructed with a 10 foot levee crown. Consequently, this may require backing the vehicle up or down stream to the laying party.

Rules of Thumb: It is extremely important that the work site is well supervised by a trained individual. Labor and resource requirement can be decreased and efficiency increased by following some simple "rules of thumb":

- Construct on a firm foundation
- Sandbags should be filled 1/2 to 2/3 full
- Sandbags should not be tied, but folded
- Always have the butt of the bag facing up stream
- Each bag should be placed with 1/3 overlap and be well mauled into place

Command & Control at the Work Site: How do you control a flood fighting effort? First someone has to be in charge of the operation. Since coordination between many agencies is a must, it is recommended that an Emergency Operations Center be established and operated 24 hours daily until the emergency is over. When operating the EOC, consider the following:

- Radio and telephone communications systems
- Television and/or radio monitor weather and river forecasts.
- Emergency generator in case of power outages
- Administrative supplies
- Levee Operations and Maintenance Manuals
- State, County, and local maps
- Flash lights, telephone books, emergency phone rosters
- Listing of local contractors, Red Cross, Salvation Army, hospitals, polices, State/County Emergency Operations center, etc.

Common Misconceptions In Flood Fighting: The efficiency of undertaking a flood fight can be increased by avoiding some of the common mistakes and misunderstanding about the process. Many people think that sandbagging is a mindless endeavor; just fill the bags and throw them in place. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. Sandbagging operation is an "art" that requires understanding and thought. Remember *time, weather conditions, hours of darkness, and limited resources* are your enemy.

Plan Development: In the development of your flood fighting plans, you must consider the characteristics of the adjacent river or stream. Flashing streams and rivers require rapid response, while moderately rising streams and rivers allow greater reaction and warning time. Therefore, it is essential that you flood fighting plans are based on the available "reaction time".

Privacy and Security Notice

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Comments, Suggestions, Feedback?

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